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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Letter dated 1 April 1999 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights

During the Commission meeting yesterday morning, 31 March 1999, you prevented the head of the delegation of Palestine from raising a point of order when the delegate of Israel, in his intervention, went beyond the scope of item 8 under study (Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine).

The head of the delegation of Palestine based himself in the practice of this right on General Assembly resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, which established the right of the delegation of Palestine to raise points of order, and on the explanatory note by the Secretary-General on the mentioned resolution (A/52/1002 of 4 August 1998).

These documents established the right enjoyed by the delegation of Palestine when studying an issue on Palestine or the Middle East during the work of any United Nations organ. Yet, you prevented, in a coercive and arbitrary manner, the head of the delegation of Palestine from practising that right by your decision which was inconsistent with the aforementioned General Assembly resolution as well as with its explanatory note by the Secretary-General. More than that, you failed to stop the delegation of Israel when he transgressed the order of the session by talking about issues which had nothing to do with the item under study.

It is the right of the delegation of Palestine to ask for this mistake to be remedied in front of the Commission as soon as possible. As a reminder and for better information, I am enclosing a copy of the aforementioned General Assembly resolution as well as a copy of the explanatory note by the Secretary-General in this respect.

I would be grateful if you could have this letter as well as its enclosures* distributed, as soon as possible, under item 8, to the members of the Commission as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed) Nabil RAMLAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

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* Available for consultation in the files of the secretariat.